(e) a matching unit for determining by electronic processing whether the fingerprint data created from the fingerprint pattern detected by said fingerprint sensor matches with any of the registered fingerprint data stored in said semiconductor memory device; and

(f) a control unit for unlocking the locking mechanism through said restricting mechanism or electronic circuit when there is a match between the detected fingerprint data and the registered fingerprint data;

wherein at least one of said components (b) to (f) is housed in a portable key unit separated from said locking mechanism.

12. (new) The locking device of claim 11 wherein said pressure-based fingerprint sensor and said semiconductor memory device are housed in said locking mechanism, and wherein said matching unit is housed in said portable key unit.

13. (new) The locking device according to claim 11 wherein said pressure-based fingerprint sensor and said matching unit are housed in said locking mechanism, and wherein said matching unit is housed in said portable key unit.

14. (new) The locking device of claim 11 wherein said pressure-based fingerprint sensor and said matching unit are housed in said portable key unit, and wherein said semiconductor memory device is housed in said locking mechanism.

15. (new) The locking device of claim 11 wherein said pressure-based fingerprint sensor, said matching unit, and said semiconductor memory device are housed in said portable key unit.

16. (new) The locking device of claim 11, wherein said locking mechanism and said portable key unit are connected either electrically through a connector, by wireless, through an infrared beam, by magnetic coupling, or electrostatically.

17. (new) The locking device of claim 11 wherein said portable key unit is a card.

18. (new) A locking device comprising:

(a) a locking mechanism for locking movement of an object to be unlocked;

(b) a mechanism or an electronic circuit for restricting unlocking movement of the object;

(c) a pressure-based fingerprint sensor for detecting a fingerprint pattern;

(d) a semiconductor memory device for storing registered fingerprint data;

(e) a matching unit for determining by electronic processing whether the fingerprint data created from the fingerprint pattern detected by said fingerprint sensor matches with any of the registered fingerprint data stored in said semiconductor memory device; and

(f) a control unit for unlocking the locking mechanism through said restricting mechanism or electronic circuit when there is a match between the detected fingerprint data and the registered fingerprint data;

wherein all of the components (b) to (f) are housed in said locking mechanism.

19. (new) A switching device comprising:

(a) a switch for starting operation of an object;

(b) a pressure-based fingerprint sensor for detecting a fingerprint pattern;

(c) a semiconductor memory device for storing registered fingerprint data;

(d) a matching unit for determining by electronic processing whether the fingerprint data created from the fingerprint pattern detected by said sensor matched with any of the registered fingerprint data stored in said semiconductor memory device;

(e) a control unit for operating said switch when there is a match between the detected fingerprint data and the registered fingerprint data;

wherein said pressure-based fingerprint sensor or said semiconductor memory device is housed in a portable key unit, and wherein said pressure-based fingerprint sensor is separated from said switch.

20. (new) The switching device of claim 19 wherein said pressure-based fingerprint sensor and said matching unit are housed in said switch, and wherein said semiconductor memory device is housed in said portable key unit.

21. (new) The switching device of claim 19 wherein said pressure-based fingerprint sensor and said matching unit are housed in said portable key unit, and wherein said semiconductor memory device is housed in said switch.

22. (new) The switching device of claim 19 wherein said pressure-based fingerprint sensor and said matching unit are housed in said portable key unit, and wherein said matching unit is housed in said switch.

23. (new) The switching device of claim 19 wherein said switch and said portable key unit are connected either electrically through a connector, by wireless, through an infrared beam, by magnetic coupling, or electrostatically.

24. (new) The switching device of claim 22 wherein said portable key unit is a card.

25. (new) A switching device comprising:

(a) a switch for starting operation of an object;

(b) a pressure-based fingerprint sensor for detecting a fingerprint pattern;

(c) a semiconductor memory device for storing registered fingerprint data;

(d) a matching unit for determining by electronic processing whether the fingerprint data created from the fingerprint pattern detected by said sensor matched with any of the registered fingerprint data stored in said semiconductor memory device;

(e) a control unit for operating said switch when there is a match between the detected fingerprint data and the registered fingerprint data;

wherein said pressure-based fingerprint sensor and said semiconductor memory device are housed in said switch, and wherein said matching unit is housed in a portable key unit.

26. (new) A switching device comprising:

(a) a switch for starting operation of an object;

(b) a pressure-based fingerprint sensor for detecting a fingerprint pattern;

(c) a semiconductor memory device for storing registered fingerprint data;

(d) a matching unit for determining by electronic processing whether the fingerprint data created from the fingerprint pattern detected by said sensor matched with any of the registered fingerprint data stored in said semiconductor memory device;

(e) a control unit for operating said switch when there is a match between the detected fingerprint data and the registered fingerprint data;

wherein all of the components (b) to (e) are housed in said switch.

27. (new) A lock-controlling system comprising:

(a) a locking mechanism for locking and unlocking movement of an object;

(b) a control circuit for controlling whether said locking mechanism locks or unlocks movement of said object;